

[Mrs. Bessie Parish]

October 19, 1939

Mrs. Bessie Parish (Beautician)

Wilmont Road,

Charlotte, N.C.

Mary P. Brown, Writer

Dudley W. Crawford, Reviser Original Names: Changed Names:

Bessie Parish Betty Parks

Ernest Parish Ed Parks [???

"I am the third child of a family of six, was born in Inverness, Fla., 1915. No, I am a little different from most people who come here from Florida in that my father never owned an orange grove; he is a bookkeeper for a big lumber company.

"You know I just love a big family, that is, of course, if they can have the right care while they are growing up. I know the children in our family were just as happy as any crowd of children could be. We had our little spats but on the whole we were 'all for one and one for all'.

"I entered school at the age of six, and my lessons were always easy; I never fell below eighty five and I had finished the ninth grade when I was fourteen. That year Ed Parks came to town and, like all the high school girls, I was out trying to catch a beau and made a hit with him. We were married that same year, so I said good bye to my class mates and

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hello to the young married set. Although I love my husband dearly, I realize we married too young. I see the need of a better education every day.

"I have three fine children, and I want them all to finish college. I realize that if a child fails to get a 2 good education in this age it is almost impossible for them to get a position that will pay them enough to exist on at all. I think the school system has improved so much since I was in school. This new unit system is one of the finest things I have ever seen. When one of the children finish working one of those units they know all about the subject, and it is so interesting to get up the material with which to work it out. I am going to school all over again with my children.

"During the depression Ed, like a lot of other men , lost his position, and entered the printing business as an apprentice. I studied beauty culture in the meantime, as I saw his salary as an apprentice was not going to be enough to take care of our needs. I got a place in one of the beauty shops in town. Of course, my earnings are based on commissions, and it took some time to build up a clientele; but now I average around thirty dollars a week. You see the owner of the shop is responsible for all the expense, such as equipment, rents, lights, water, and the materials with which we work, and they pay the operators a percentage of what they take in. We are always anxious to take in all we can. I am very fond of the shop owner, she has five working for her and we are all busy from morning till night. She is very considerate 3 of us too. When a new customer comes in she always gives one of us the credit for it.

"I got quite a kick out of my work sometimes. Every body responds to flattery. Some of the women who come up there want to be beautiful so bad, but when you have nothing to work on what are you going to do? Well, I try my best to make them look better. I have in mind a lady who came up the other day. Her eyebrows were as bushy as a mop, she wanted an arch. I went to work plucking eyebrows and the tears ran down her cheeks like rivers. When I had finished she wasn't satisfied, she wanted what she called a high arch. I had never heard of anything like that, but I plucked a few more. Then in order to make me

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understand what she was wanting, she took a picture of her favorite movie actress from her purse and told me to arch her brows like that. I have found people do not want their work done to suit their own individuality but they want to be like some one else. No one knows the thrill I get when I have finished with a customer and she is pleased. I don't mean to boast in any way about my work but I can put in a beautiful finger wave. It's with great satisfaction that I watch the wave form under my finger. I think I have the heart of an artist anyway.

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"Haven't been old enough to vote many times, but each time I have voted a Democratic ticket. I really believe the time will come when people will cease to worry about party relations; but will vote for the man that is best suited for the place. I vote the way I want to and Ed votes like he pleases. I believe in women voting, they have always had to help the men out in all the other things, why not vote?

"I live so far out that I don't try to come in to church. We have a little community church out near where I live. Yes, you guessed it! it is a Baptist, and I bet there is not one tenth as much interest shown in any of the larger churches in the city as we have out there. Every body seems to have a definite task and they take great pride in doing it well. I believe everybody ought to tithe and most of the members out there do. It makes one feel that he has at least repaid what the Lord has loaned him. We have some unfortunates and we have poundings for them, and then we send coal if they need it. I don't think people should depend entirely on their church for their support, but at the same time I feel that any Christian organization should be able to hold up their less fortunate members.

"You ought to see me washing little faces and stirring around on Sunday morning getting ready to go to church.

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My little fellows wouldn't miss their Sunday School for anything—even if their father is the superintendent. I am so glad he is interested in church work, so many husbands are

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not, you know. I think it is so fine for the father to sit by his little boy in church or Sunday School.

“My health is very good. I haven't been to a doctor or had one to see me except when the children were born, then I went to the hospital. I needn't boast too much though, for I think I am going to have to see a dentist pretty soon. You know in order to have the necessities and a few luxuries it would take fifty dollars a week to run our home.

“I have had a desire in the back of my mind ever since I can remember to be a commercial artist. Sometimes it is almost an obsession. I may, someday in the distant future, start out in that direction. I wish I could find some one in town that would teach me at night. My present work is more or less a creative art, and I am crazy about that.

“You are going to laugh when I tell you what my greatest amusement is—pitching horse shoes. I also like to read, but since the library closed I find it hard to get anything worth reading. I wonder if they will ever get it opened again? I want to take up bowling sometime if I ever get the money. In the summertime we go to the swimming 6 pool often, we all enjoy a good swim.

“Now that is about all I have to say right now, come to see me when I get to be a commercial artist, and the children are older. Then we will all get together and make a story worth reading.”